Source: https://yamamoto-kou.livejournal.com/3545.html

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The Village Where the Witch Dwells (□□□□□□)

In the early hours before dawn at the Black Order's HQ, Kanda lay awake on his bed watching a peculiar object. It is described as a lotus flower suspended in clear amniotic fluid contained within a large hour glass. Inside, two of the flower petals had fallen and rested on the brass base of the hour glass, but apart from that, the lotus was in full bloom.

Kanda was interrupted from his contemplation by River Wenham, with summons from Komui. A mission awaited him in a village named, Dankelm, located in the forests of northern Germany. Lately, people who had gone to the village failed to return, and the place was earning a reputation as the “Forest of No Return”. The Order had suspected that the oddity may be connected with Innocence, so Finders were sent to investigate. That was two days ago. Before the Finders went into the forest, they'd contacted the Order from a small town outside the forest, Mittel Barth. That was the last they heard from the Finders.

Komui showed Kanda a map of the forest and informed him that he would have to cross a valley to get to the village. There was an old stone bridge there. Once he crossed it, he would arrive at Dankelm village. Komui also started talking about an old legend that surrounded the forest, but cut himself off before he said too much, and simply reminded Kanda to be careful. Kanda's mission was to go to Dankelm to locate the missing Finders and if they are still alive, to rescue them.

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Kanda arrived in Mittel Barth, and stood before the only road that led into the forest and Dankelm village. An old lady who'd guided Kanda in the town asked him if he really wanted to go to the village. There was a horrible rumour about the village which said a witch lived there, and that she would snatch children who got lost in the forest, and eat them. Kanda was surprised to hear there were still things like witches in this time and age, but he dismissed the rumours. Nonetheless, he was reminded of Komui's words. The old lady asked him again not to go to the “Witch's Village.” Kanda ignored the advice and entered the forest.

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Although it was still daytime, the thick forest obscured much of the light and the forest path remained dark. It felt like the inside of a great living beast. As Kanda walked through the forest, he felt no presence of humans at all, nor sight or shadow of the three Finders. Suddenly, he heard the approach of hidden footsteps and an immediate sense of killing intent. In the instant that Kanda turned around, he saw the person–a young man dressed in a tea-coloured vest over a shirt, wielding an axe.

Kanda drew his katana–Mugen–in a flash, and struck the man in the stomach with the back of the sword. The man crumpled in agony, but got up again quickly. His eyes opened, and his face became distorted, blood vessels swelling. It was an AKUMA! Kanda pressed his fingers to Mugen and swiped down the length of its blade, activating his Innocence. He sliced open the enemy in one stroke, and a spherical AKUMA released from the corpse, canons at the ready. It was only an initial stage AKUMA, and Kanda dispatched it easily.

Danger over, Kanda sheathed his sword and surveyed his surroundings again. If AKUMA had invaded the forest, it's no wonder normal humans were no match for them. Perhaps the truth of this forest of no return was simply–

Kanda caught the sound of someone stepping on the leaves on the forest floor. He whipped Mugen out again and demanded, “Who's there!”

“P-please don't kill me!”

It was a tall and large man, with arms that looked like he could strangle an ox. He had red hair and green eyes. And, Kanda noted, he wore the white uniform and hood of the Order's Finders.

“Are you one of the Finders?” Kanda asked.

“Y-yes. My name is Goz. You use a Japanese sword, and you have long black hair… You're the Exorcist, Kanda, aren't you? Did you come to rescue us? Thank you so much!” Goz reported that his two comrades had already been killed and he'd been escaping from the AKUMA all this time.

Kanda asked him what had happened. Goz explained that they were on the path when suddenly, the man Kanda killed earlier appeared and attacked them. It was over in only a few seconds and even though they're Finders, they couldn't do anything. Kanda thought to himself that against AKUMA, it didn't matter how strong you were. If you didn't hold a weapon powered by Innocence, you would be no match for the AKUMA.

Goz continued his sob story, but Kanda silenced him abruptly. New enemies had arrived and he raised his sword again. This time, there were four of them, and like the man before, they were all wielding hatchets or axes. They surrounded Kanda and Goz and attacked without hesitation. Kanda took one down easily with a slice across his neck, and just as he thought, all four were AKUMA. Kanda killed two more quickly, but he was too late. The last one raised his hatchet to Goz's throat and held the Finder hostage.

“Don't move! I'll kill him!”

Kanda realised that the man's speech pattern marked him as an AKUMA in a human skin. He glared balefully at the two, and said, “Do whatever you want.”

“Eh?” Both the man and Goz returned Kanda's look in shock.

“I said, do whatever you want.”

The moment Mugen's guard was lowered, the AKUMA pushed Goz at Kanda and fled. Hampered by Goz's larger body, Kanda couldn't go after the AKUMA and cursed sharply.

“Get off me, you fool!”

“S-sorry!” By the time Goz managed to get on his feet, the AKUMA had disappeared. Kanda cursed again.

“I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.” Goz apologised continuously, but Kanda ignored him.

Kanda suspected that the AKUMA had fled towards the village. “Let's go!”

Goz was caught off-guard, but quickly recovered. “Ah–yes, sir!”

The two men ran deeper into the forest towards Dankelm village, Goz trailing behind the much faster and agile Exorcist.

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Soon, Kanda and Goz arrived at the valley and crossed the stone bridge, entering Dankelm village. The village appeared very run-down, as if something terrible had happened to it. Weeds grew everywhere without care, and the place looked deserted, like nobody even lived in the houses. In fact, the surroundings seemed unnaturally quiet too. There wasn't even the sound of animals and pets.

Goz wondered if all the villagers had been abducted and eaten by the “witch” but Kanda dismissed that idea as utter nonsense. Without further discussion, they stepped into the village, Kanda keeping an eye on their surroundings. He couldn't sense the AKUMA who'd escaped anywhere. Goz realised that Kanda was all covered in AKUMA blood from the earlier battle, and asked him to wipe the blood off before entering the village, for fear of scaring the people off. Not to mention, the AKUMA's blood contains the deadly Virus which can kill instantly.

Kanda refused the offered handkerchief, stating that he didn't need such things.

It started to drizzle, and they walked further into the centre of the silent village. Goz suggested they looked for a suitable house to pay a visit. At that moment, Kanda caught a soft sound coming from a small general store, and they went in to investigate. Nobody met them at the counter, so Goz announced their arrival loudly. Suddenly, a white-haired old man emerged from behind the counter, surprising the two visitors.

Kanda introduced themselves as members of the Black Order. Then, he asked the old man about the people who didn't return from the village, and the “Forest of No Return.” But, the old man didn't seem to know that anything was wrong.

“Has anyone besides the local villagers come recently?” Kanda asked.

“No. Not that I know of, that is. There's nothing in this village, and it's out of the way too. Apart from relatives or friends of the villagers, nobody would come here.”

“I see… Has anything changed about the village or the forest recently?”

“No. But then, I don't go out very much…”

The old man stepped out from behind the counter, and Kanda realised that the his leg was deformed (or injured). Kanda wasn't going to get more information from him. The Exorcist wondered again, where the AKUMA could have escaped to.

“By the way, are there other people in this village?”

“Y-yes. Of course, there are.” The old man answered in bewilderment.

Goz expressed his relief, and Kanda took that as a cue to go visit some other homes for information. But, when they opened the door to go out again, the light drizzle from earlier had become a full-blown downpour. Their hesitation to step out into the rain was obvious, and the old man invited the two visitors to stay in his shop house for the night. There were no guesthouses in the village, but he had an extra bedroom on the second floor. Kanda and Goz agreed to stay.

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The room on the second floor had decorations obviosly meant for a young girl. There was a small bed inside, barely large enough for Kanda, much less Goz, so the Finder offered Kanda the bed and sat on a chair himself. They started to discuss their mission. Goz surmised that the things happening in the village were unrelated to Innocence, after all. On Kanda's part, his mission was to retrieve the Finders, but now, he couldn't leave without taking care of the AKUMA first.

Goz offered his help, useless as it was against AKUMA. Although unwilling to take someone along, Kanda couldn't let Goz return by himself with the AKUMA running loose; he'd probably die in the forest before he got out.

“Doesn't matter to me. Just don't get in my way.”

“Wah! Thank you so much!” Goz was child-like in his gratitude.

Kanda thought to himself that with Goz around, it'd probably be easier to talk to the villagers too.

A little while later, the storekeeper summoned them for dinner. Downstairs, they met the old man's daughter coming out of the kitchen. She was a pretty girl with blond hair and blue eyes, and only a little younger than Kanda–probably 16 or 17 years old. She introduced herself as Sophia.

They sat down together at a table for dinner, which consisted of bread, sausages and potato soup. Sophia apologised for the simple meal, but Goz was more than grateful. During dinner talk, Sophia revealed that she worked in Mittel Barth outside the village as a seamstress, and only came home about ten days ago. She hasn't been back for a while either. When Goz asked further, Sophia claimed that she didn't see or meet anything strange on the path to the village, nor did she feel anything in the village was different from before.

That meant that the AKUMA probably arrived less then ten days ago, Kanda concluded.

But, when Goz mentioned the “Witch's Village”, Sophia's father paled and excused himself hurriedly. Sophia explained that the “witch” was just an old story that some of the older folks were still spreading around. The “witch” was an eccentric old lady who lived by herself in a small hut just outside the village, but she was a normal woman, and harmless.

After dinner, Sophia gave Goz a bag of jelly beans because she liked him. Goz asked Sophia if the room they were occupying was hers, but she said it wasn't. Goz pressed further, asking if it belonged to her mother. Sophia's blue eyes filled with sadness and said that her mother died three years ago. The room didn't belong to her either. Goz apologised for bringing the topic up, and the two visitors excused themselves to retire to bed.

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In the middle of the night, Kanda woke up suddenly to find Goz missing and the door to their room wide open. Fearing the worst, he ran out to look for Goz, and found a trail of jelly beans. He followed it and ended up in the outskirts of the village, before a small hut. Could this be the hut Sophia was talking about?

Before Kanda could decide if he wanted to go in, an AKUMA attacked. Kanda killed it easily, but was surprised when it apologised, and begged for forgiveness, before disintegrating. Putting that aside, Kanda walked closer to the hut and stepped inside. The interior stank of rotting flesh and appeared to be deserted, though a fire was burning at the hearth.

There was also an adjoining room, and it was there that Kanda found Goz lying on a bed inside, gagged and tied up. He appeared unharmed, but next to him was the old man from the general store.

Was the old man behind it all? “You're an AKUMA too!?” Kanda demanded.

Surprised Kanda's shout, the old man spun around with a loud yell. Yet, his features remained that of a powerless old man. He wasn't an AKUMA, after all.

Kanda ripped off the gag on Goz, who reported hurriedly that the old man was trying to help him, and that when he regained consciousness, he was already tied up in this room. The old man had come later.

Kanda asked how he got there. Goz explained that he had a dream, and in his dream, he was chasing a piece of steak and when he woke up, he was in this room. Kanda didn't understand what that meant. In any case, he cut the ropes binding Goz and the old man begged the Exorcist and Finder to leave the village and never come back.

What the old man was saying, basically, was that the village was getting more dangerous than the forest outside.

But, Kanda still wanted to find out who was behind the AKUMA appearing near the village, and who or what this “witch” was. He figured their enemy was back in the general store in the village.

Back at the store, they met Sophia again.

“What happened? When I woke up, I couldn't find my father nor the two of you. I was really worried!”

Kanda pushed Goz aside and stepped in front of the younger girl. “Sophia, we need to talk.” He looked her in the eye, but detected no trace of blurriness. “What is that hut?”

“Hut?” Sophia tilted her head slightly.

“The hut outside the village.”

“Ahh, you mean the 'Witch's Hut'.”

Kanda indicated Goz. “He was abducted and left in that hut.”

“What did you say?” Sophia exclaimed, her eyes going to Goz. “Abducted and left there…! Who could have done that!?”

“What is this 'Witch's Hut'? No, in fact, what is this 'witch'?”

“That hut has always been inhabited by an old lady…”

“Is THAT the witch!?” Goz interrupted.

Sophia shook her head. “No. She came from somewhere else, and had stayed there ever since. She was a reticent old lady. Since then, this village has had this legend of the witch. A legend which said that a witch lived here who ate up little children that lost their way. Of course, there's no way a real witch could exist. But, the village kept this up by changing the witch, continuously giving the role to a woman in the village who had no relatives.”

“Role?” Kanda stared at Sophia.

“Yes. For the exchange of bare essentials such as food, clothing and a place to stay, she must live an existence despised by the villagers. That is the 'witch'. The 'witch' was an evil being, so she would attract all the calamities of the village onto herself. That is what the villagers believed. Whatever it may be, it was true that as long as these 'witches' lived in the village, the village, although poor, was peaceful.”

Goz couldn't believe what he was hearing. Sophia stepped partially into the shadows, and continued her story.

“A month ago, the 'witch' died. I was in town, so I didn't know about it.” Her eyes turned to some unknown and unseen enemy in challenge. “After she died, lots of strange things began happening in the village. Pets died one after another, children playing on tree stumps would fall and be badly injured, the most resilient person in the village came down with pneumonia…”

“Surely, these are just coincidences?”

“Yes, surely they are. But, for the superstitious villagers who were born and raised here, they decided to lay the blame on the missing 'witch'. For the sake of their own peaceful life, they thought the best thing to do was to appoint a new 'witch'. And, that's how Angela lost her white feathers.”

“Who's Angela?”

Sophia's eyes started to glow with light. “My twin sister. She's confined to bed due to her bad health. That's why I've been working in the town since I was fifteen–to earn enough money for her medicine.”

“Ahhhh..... The room we were using belonged to Angela, didn't it?”

“That's right.”

”.....Where's Angela now?”

Sophia started to laugh. It was a laugh which sent chills down the spine. “Didn't I tell you already? Angela was chosen to become the 'witch'!” Suddenly, Sophia seemed to coughed something out of her mouth, and when she continued, her voice had changed.

“Ever since Mother died, and Father's leg is bad, our so-called general store had depended on others to help bring supplies in. The money Sophia sent was used up by my medicine. So, it went without saying that I was selected. I had to live in that unhealthy place. The only source of water was outside, but when I went out to fetch water, children would throw stones at me. I had nothing to eat either. I lived in the witch's hut for only ten days, before I died.”

Goz couldn't say anything in the face of such a terrible story. Yet, that was not all.

“Of course, Sophia was living in town and she didn't know anything. After a long absence, she came back for a break one day and found out everything. I had already been dead five days. She built a tombstone for me, and buried me in the backyard of the witch's hut.” Tears began to fall from her wide-opened eyes.

“Although she's only a seamstress for now, she had planned to open her own shop. Once she did that, she'd have been able to take me to a doctor in the city. That was the only thought which kept Sophia working so hard and trying her best!”

“And, that's when she met the Earl of Millennium?” Kanda stated.

Sophia, no, Angela's eyes began to glow with murderous intent. “That's right. Sophia called for me. And, my soul returned, and entered Sophia, and became AKUMA.”

“UWA-!!” Goz's sudden shout surprised even Kanda. The Finder's eyes had filled with tears and he began sobbing. “That's... too cruel! What were these people thinking?! What witch? That's crazy! Even Sophia was sacrificed!”

Kanda asked Angela if she'd killed all the villagers too. Angela laughed gleefully in reply. “Yes,” she said. “In the most painful and cruel way possible!” She lured the children of the village out, killed them and buried them all in the hut. For revenge, she approached the parents and relatives of these children, then killed half of them, and turned the other half into AKUMA. She forced them to kill any who approached the village if they wanted to see their children again.

Kanda realised that the AKUMA in the forest were all men from Dankelm village. The one who had asked for forgiveness; he was either sorry for being unable to protect his family, or it was a belated apology for the young girl they tortured to death.

After finishing her story, Angela changed into her AKUMA form; she was a Level II AKUMA. The sweet child who should have been an angel was now, truly a demon. The Earl had turned her into a real witch.

Kanda ordered Goz to flee, and they ran out of the general store. He couldn't fight in such confinement. When they reached the street outside, Angela crashed through the door of the store and stepped out as well. Just then, Angela's father came back and begged his daughter to stop. But, he was killed too. Angela felt no remorse for the murder, claiming that her father deserved it. Goz was torn, and held the dead man in his arms.

Kanda drew Mugen and advanced to attack, but Goz looked at him. “Kanda… are you really going to kill her?”

Kanda cast a suspicious eye on Goz. “Of course. She is an AKUMA. I am an Exorcist.”

“Please don't! She's a victim too!”

“Are you stupid?”

“So what if I am! I just don't want to see any more people die here!” Goz's eyes were filled with tears.

“Goz.”

“What?”

“She's not a person any more. She's an AKUMA.”

Kanda's cold answer only served to increase Goz's agitation. “You have no human emotions at all!”

“Then, are you going to just sit here and get killed? In that case, pull out of the Finders squad!”

Goz clenched his fists tightly, and refused to budge. Kanda ignored him now, and advanced on Angela. Without knowing the abilities of the AKUMA, he had to be extra careful.

However, before he could get any closer, Angela summoned her minions. The previously dead silent village seemed to wake up all of a sudden, as the rest of the villagers approached them. They were all the men who'd been turned into AKUMA–about fifty of them–and they were ordered to kill the two outsiders.

Kanda sliced through the enemy without mercy, killing ten of the AKUMA within minutes. In another breath, he killed three more, but was starting to feel overwhelmed by their numbers. Then, he caught sight of Goz fighting the AKUMA too, a hatchet swinging in one hand.

“That fool!” Such paltry weapons were useless against AKUMA, never mind his own lack of defence against the AKUMA's virus. Kanda rushed towards Goz, and saw another enemy coming up behind the Finder. The other man had an axe, and it was coming down on Goz.

“Goz!” Kanda yelled, and leapt. Was he going to make it in time?

Goz turned to the sound of Kanda's voice, and time seemed to slow down as the axe descended. Kanda reached the Finder and pushed him out of the way at the same time he felt the impact on his chest.

“Guh!”

Flesh cut open, and pain exploded in his mind. Blood sprayed over the ground with his next breath.

“Uwaaah! Kanda!!” Goz cried out in despair. He ran up to Kanda, but the Exorcist held up a hand and stopped him.

“Stay back!”

“B-but! All that blood…! And, and, you'll be infected by the AKUMA's virus!”

Kanda shook his head. “The AKUMA's virus cannot affect me! Just get out of here!”

Goz looked uncertain, and chewed on his lip, but finally, he nodded. In this battlefield, he would only be a burden. Even Goz had to realise that, and accept the humble fact that there was nothing else he could do.

Kanda made sure Goz had escaped, and turned back to face the increasing numbers of AKUMA. There's no way he could cut through all of them. Kanda raised his blade again, his Innocence glowing and released the attack spell.

“Mugen, Bring Forth Calamity! Kaichuu, First Illusion!”

That one attack decimated the AKUMA hoard, leaving only a few left. Kanda advanced towards them purposefully. Under the moon light, the only sound that reverberated in the village was that of flesh and bones being broken, and blood rained everywhere. Finally, all the AKUMA were dead, and Kanda lowered his sword. His head felt feverish, as if the heat of burning the AKUMA had gotten to him. His ears filled with the sound of his own panting.

Yet, Kanda continued to walk forward, heading for his real enemy. Blood dripped from his body, most of it his own. The wound in his chest burned with agony, and the bleeding had not stop. He had to finish this quickly.

Angela watched the entire scene with her arms crossed, looking every bit like the witch she'd become.

”…….Not bad, Exorcist. Just what I expected. But, do you think you're a match for me?”

“Nonsense.”

He raised Mugen again, but suddenly, the world seemed to fall away, and his surroundings turned completely white. What was this place? Was this Angela's ability? Just as suddenly, the whiteness cleared up, and Kanda found himself back in the Black Order HQ, in his own room.

Am I hallucinating?

Yet, everything felt real, and it really did look like he was back in his room. Maybe, Angela's ability was teleportation? Kanda examined the room carefully, but nothing was out of the ordinary. On the table, the hour glass with his lotus flower still looked the same as always, in full bloom. The two petals on the base were also right.

Thank god.

But, as if that was a sign, the amniotic fluid in the glass started to bubble, like it was boiling. The lotus flower within seemed to shiver in great anguish, and the petals began to turn black.

It's withering.

Kanda held his breath, eyes fixed on the dying lotus flower as the petals fell one by one and the flower shrivelled.

That's... impossible.

His insides seem to freeze with dread and hopelessness sank in.

“Kanda...”

It was Goz's voice.

Goz? That's right. I'm supposed to be in Dankelm village. I see. So, that's it.

He gripped Mugen tightly, and slashed through the space in front of him.

“Gyaaaaaa!” Angela screamed in pain.

The world around him fell away, and Kanda found himself standing back on the street in front of the general store. It was an illusion, after all.

Angela held her injured arm, glaring at him. It wasn't a serious injury, but bad enough to dent her armour.

“Why– how did you know!? How could you be so calm when faced with your most desperate desire!?”

Kanda ignored her question and stated, “Your ability is to read the minds of your victims, and show them a dream with their most desired wish to entice them.” That's how she lured the children out. That also explained the steak in Goz's dream. “As for my most desperate desire… You read it, but you didn't read beyond the surface.”

She could never understand the significance of that flower withering. My true wish...

“In addition, my wish is not something that others can grant for me.”

Kanda leapt at his enemy, Mugen drawn and raised.

Someday… Until the day I meet that person again...

“Mugen, Bring Forth Calamity!”

I will continue to destroy the AKUMA!

“Kaichuu, First Illusion!”

The beasts emerged from Mugen's blade and flew towards Angela. Their teeth sank into her, as she screamed in agony. Her flesh began crumbling away.

Goz, who had been watching the entire fight, couldn't hold back his tears any more and he ran towards her.

“Don't come closer!” Blood spilled from Angela's mouth, but she pinned her eyes on Goz, and he stopped in his tracks. “I'm a witch! I'm the one who killed all the villagers, and even my own father! I'm a frightening witch!”

”….I know.” Goz continued to walk towards Angela with slow but sure steps. When he was right in front of her, he put out his hand.

All sign of hostility disappeared from Angela's eyes. “I'm a witch. …..I don't deserve to die in gentle hands such as yours.”

Just as Goz's hand touched Angela, the AKUMA body disintegrated, and exploded into dust.

“Aaa…. aaaaaaaaa.” Goz pressed his hands onto the ground, wailing. Kanda sheathed his sword silently.

With all the AKUMA gone, the village turned peaceful once again, as if the earlier deadly battle was nothing more than a lie. The moonlit scenery was rare indeed. The village where a witch lived, and where a witch destroyed. This time, this village will be kept in eternal slumber.

It's the end of Dankelm village.

“Let's go.”

Goz stood up weakly, and drew a cross over his chest. “Sophia, Angela, rest in peace.”

After a short and silent prayer, Goz started walking. Without a word, the two men departed the village of dead and went home.

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Back at HQ, Kanda was more anxious to return to his room to check on the flower than treat his injuries. He couldn't erase the sight of the flower withering from his mind. It couldn't be, he kept telling himself.

He pushed the door open savagely, and burst into his room. On the table, he saw the lotus flower in the hourglass looking exactly the same as before he left the mission. Kanda breathed a sigh of relief.

This lotus flower, and my wish, represents all hope. I must find that person as soon as possible, while the flower is still in bloom...

Someone knocked on his door. It was Goz, who'd come to fetch him to the infirmary to treat his injuries. Kanda refused, saying his injury wasn't serious. But, Goz insisted, and Kanda gave in. As they walked down the corridor towards the infirmary, Goz thanked Kanda for saving his life earlier.

But, Kanda was also saved by Goz's voice when he was trapped in the illusion. If it weren't for Goz shouting his name, he might not have made it.

Goz continued, “If you really were a cold-blooded person, you'd have left me to die. I'm really sorry for saying that about you.”

“What nonsense.”

“Really, you were the one who destroyed all the AKUMA despite your injuries. I couldn't do anything at all. I had no right to say those things.”

“Indeed.”

But...

Kanda recalled the sight of Angela right before she disintegrated. The expression on her face looked like one who had been saved, and a gentle smile had appeared.

It doesn't matter to me. But, Angela wouldn't agree with that.

Out loud, Kanda replied, “As far as battles are concerned, I never held any hope for the Finders to do anything. Your apology is meaningless.”

Whatever Goz was intending to say, he kept to himself and lowered his head. They made their way to the infirmary without further conversation.

The doctor who examined Kanda remarked on the severity of the wound on his chest. The cut made by the axe still looked fresh, but it was already starting to close, and the bleeding had stopped. In a few more days, it wouldn't even leave a scar.

Kanda looked at the Sanskrit character inscribed on his left chest, and thought to himself, “Looks like my body can still endure.” But, up till when, he didn't know. The wound was bandaged up anyway.

I have to find that person fast...

It was at this time that a loud wail resounded in the halls of the Black Order tower, coming from its Gate Keeper.

“This one is OUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUT~!!!!”

The doctors of the Medical Section broke into chaos.

“What?!”

“An AKUMA is here!?”

As if intentionally fuelling the men's fears, the Gate Keeper cried out again.

“It's a bug! The pentacle on his forehead is cursed! He's out! Out!!”

So, it's an AKUMA. No rest for the weary. Kanda stood up and shrugged on his uniform again. He grabbed Mugen in one hand, and looked out the window. The night sky was filled with a full moon. He stepped through the large window, and emerged outside the tower. Cold wind blew at his hair, fluttering his uniform. There was only void as far as his eyes could see.

When will my wish be granted?

The thought sent his heart racing.

This is ridiculous. All I have to do now is take down this AKUMA who dared to come to the Order's headquarters.

Far below, standing in front of the gate, was a youth with white hair.

Just one? What audacity.

Cutting into the night, Kanda flew from his perch on the tower's walls.

~ End ~